



News from



Award Health & Safety Ltd

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Proposed HSE changes to the First Aid at Work legislation - implementing October 2009

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has recently announced the biggest changes to the first aid at work regulations for over 25 years.

The reason for this change is to help employers access competent first aid, provide a more proportionate response to their first aid needs and to minimise burdens on their business.

The HSE has announced its proposed changes to the above legislation which are to be implemented from October 2009. The main changes are as follows:

The number of first aiders required was worked out according to the number of employees (taking into account visitors to the workplace) and the level of risk. Previously low medium or high risk now either Low Hazard or Higher Hazard.

Now 3 levels of first aid responsibility: Appointed Person, First Aider Emergency Trained (EFAW) or First Aider fully trained (FAW):

· An Appointed Person is someone responsible for ensuring the first aid kit remains stocked up and in date, and calls an ambulance in the event that one is required. The reason for this is otherwise 6 people may call for an ambulance, or no-one does as they all assume someone else has. They cannot give first aid for which they have not been trained. Putting them through the 1 day course may give them confidence in performing their role and be seen as investing in your staff.

· Emergency First Aid at Work is the new 1 day First Aid course (previously known as First Aid for the Appointed Person by many organisations) that will be formerly accredited by the HSE as of October 2009. The HSE stipulate the content and length of training (minimum 6 hours) and it deals with the emergency life-saving First Aid that is done whilst awaiting an ambulance.

· HSE Approved First Aid at Work course trained – currently 4 days, but to decrease to 3 days from the legislation change in October 2009. This course deals with all the other first aid emergencies not covered in the shorter course including burns, eye injuries, soft tissue/bony injuries and common medical problems such as asthma and diabetes. For more information contact www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid or Award Health & Safety Ltd to find out about our new style courses.

One in five construction sites fail health and safety checks

One in five construction sites failed health and safety checks during the latest national inspection initiative carried out by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), figures released today reveal.

Inspectors from Britain's workplace regulator visited 1759 refurbishment sites during March and checked on how 2145 contractors were complying with health and safety regulations.

On 348 sites sufficiently serious risks were discovered to warrant enforcement action being taken – either stopping work immediately or ordering improvements to be made. Close to five hundred enforcement notices were issued.

HSE said that improvements had been witnessed by its inspectors in certain parts of the country since last year – when inspectors had to take enforcement action on 30% of the sites visited.

Phillip White, HSE's new Chief Inspector of Construction, said:

"This inspection initiative was well publicised and for our inspectors to still find this level of disregard for basic health and safety standards on refurbishment sites is disappointing.

"While any improvement has to be welcomed, our inspectors still found practices so far below the acceptable standard that they felt it necessary to take enforcement action on one in five sites. This is still very worrying."Unsafe work at height practices remain a huge concern. As in the previous initiative, over half of the enforcement action taken this time was as a result of dangerous work at height, which last year (2007/08) led to the death of 34 construction workers.

The importance of training staff on fire hazards

The official line from the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and others in the run-up to fire legislation reform was that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order would introduce nothing significantly new: if employers were complying with existing fire legislation, they would likely be compliant with the Order.

But the new regime's focus on fire risk assessment and fire prevention has thrown up significant training and competence issues, and not just for safety practitioners; the need to have a fire-aware workforce is now greater than ever.

No exceptions

The Fire Safety Order requires the "responsible person" (normally the employer) to ensure all staff receive adequate fire safety training. In all premises, employers must give employees information to ensure they remain safe and know what to do in the event of a fire.

This means training staff in the effective evacuation of the premises and how to recognise and use safety systems. In some cases, when there are large numbers of other people present (such as members of the public), the responsible person must also make sure employees know how to guide others to a place of safety away from the building.

Many businesses engage contractors and other specialists on a long or short-term basis to undertake specific projects or tasks. In every case, employers must ensure all staff are appropriately trained in fire safety. Contact Award Health & Safety Ltd to see how we can help you comply with the law on Fire Safety.



Recent breach of DSE Regulations

The Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 are the sometimes overlooked member of the six-pack. Their low profile is partly due to the lack of life-threatening injuries arising from a failure to comply. But it's also probably down to the fact there have been few cases associated with them; it's rare to hear of employers being found in breach of the legislation.

The recent case of Goodwin v Bennett's UK Ltd has provoked some interest. Goodwin was employed as an insurance adviser and her work involved a fair amount of keyboard use. She started work in 2000 and was symptom-free until summer 2002 when she appears to have injured her wrists in a car accident. After noting pain in her wrists in August, she was eventually signed off work by her doctor for two weeks in November because of Tenosynovitis inflammation of the sheath surrounding the tendons in the wrist. Bennett's HR staff were notified and seem to have intervened to reduce her computer work for a while, though before long she had returned to her previous work levels. In court it emerged that at least one of her line managers wasn't told about her problem, and apart from the temporary reduction in workload, Bennett's hadn't taken any effective action to help her.

The Court of Appeal ruled in Goodwin's favour. A reassuring aspect of the judgement for employers was the finding that failing to assess an employee's workstation will only render you liable in civil law if this can be proved to be a cause of the injury. In Goodwin's case her employers were found to have aggravated rather than caused her injury. But the Court of Appeal did find that her employers should have been aware after her return to work that she was vulnerable to WRULD (work-related upper limb disorder) from moderate keyboard use and planned her work accordingly. They didn't, so they were in breach of the regulations from November 2002. Bennett's' primary failing was complete ignorance of the Regulations but, that aside, their failure to provide training and information should act as a reminder to other employers not just to make adjustments for vulnerable workers, but also to keep DSE training and instruction up to date. Proper training and information would have given Goodwin enough knowledge to consciously adjust her working practices to limit those that put her at risk.

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Bank employee gets £9,000 for broken ankle

A bank cashier who fractured her ankle when she fell down a step has received almost **£9,000** in compensation. The employee was then off sick for six months following the accident at a Lloyds TSB bank in Essex. She was carrying two metal boxes from the safe to the cashiers when the accident happened. As she passed through an open door in the passageway she fell down a step fracturing her left ankle, spraining her right ankle and damaging her left knee.

There were no signs warning employees of the hazard.

The employee had worked for five years for Lloyds TSB, which admitted liability. Anna Konzon, of Thompsons Solicitors who acted for the employee, noted that under health and safety legislation employers have a general duty of care which includes addressing these types of hazards. "A good management system should be in place so employers can identify problem areas, decide what to do, act on decisions made and check that the steps taken have been effective."

Myth of the month

Myth: Ice cream toppings have been banned for safety reasons

The reality
We were recently surprised to hear that ice cream toppings had been banned amid health and safety fears. This rumour came from an ice cream parlour giving out extra toppings in separate containers, instead of pouring them over the ice cream. They were concerned that people might slip on any spills. It's important to prevent slips - they remain the most common cause of major injuries. But in this case simply clearing up any spills as they occurred would have stopped people slipping and helped the company continue to make great ice cream taste even better!

